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Committee on Conferences
Substantive session of 2001

Draft report

Addendum

Rapporteur: Mr. Guillermo E. **Kendall** (Argentina)

II. Calendar of conferences and meetings

B. Improved utilization of conference-servicing resources and facilities

5. Provision of interpretation services to meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States

Introduction and overview

1. As requested by the Committee at its substantive session of 2000, during the course of the year the Chairperson wrote to the chairpersons of intergovernmental bodies (as reported in A/56/299, annex I), bringing to their attention the need to anticipate requests for meetings of regional and other major groupings during their sessions to allow for adequate consultations.

2. At its 436th meeting, on 27 August 2001, the Committee considered a report by the Secretary-General, introduced by a representative of the Secretariat, on the provision of interpretation services to meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States (A/56/213 and Corr.1). In accordance with established practice, such meetings are provided with interpretation services on an ad hoc basis from existing resources not used owing to the cancellation of meetings of calendar bodies.

Discussion

3. The importance of conference services to regional and other major groupings of Member States was stressed. It was noted that there was a linkage between all aspects of providing conference services: any deficiency or improvement in one area inevitably affected every other area.

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4. Satisfaction was expressed at the improvement in the provision of interpretation services over the past three years and the continued relevance of the Committee's recommendations in its previous report[1] was noted.

Conclusions and recommendations

5. The Committee noted with appreciation that the percentage of meetings held by regional and other major groupings of Member States in New York that were provided with interpretation had risen steadily, from 84 per cent during the period 1999-2000 to 90 per cent for the period from July 2000 to June 2001, and that, overall, for all four duty stations (New York, Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi) 92 per cent of requests for interpretation had been met.

6. The Committee recommended that duty stations continue to keep statistics of requests for servicing of meetings.

7. The Committee concluded that a key factor in providing interpretation services to regional and other major groupings was a sustained effort by intergovernmental organs, in cooperation with the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services, to predict the availability of such services. Flexibility in scheduling meetings by regional and other major groupings could also be instrumental in that regard.

8. The Committee again urged intergovernmental bodies to spare no effort at the planning stage to take into account meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States, to make provision for such meetings in their programmes of work and to notify the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services well in advance of any cancellations so that unutilized conference-servicing resources might, to the extent possible, be reassigned to meetings of regional and other major groupings of States.

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[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 32* (A/55/32).